

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI), by the direction of its Youth Division and in collaboration with its Traffic Safety Division, seeks to reduce the problem of underage drinking through deliberate statewide and community-level prevention efforts. ICJI anticipates the change in community attitudes and policies and increased strategies aimed at preventing and reducing underage drinking. Through the development and increase in community-level prevention efforts focused on underage drinking we anticipate a change in what is currently perceived as normative and acceptable behavior by minors who use and/or abuse alcohol. This grant will assist efforts toward community collaboration with new and existing stakeholders, youth and adult partnerships, and public education with responsibility toward reducing the high rates of alcohol use by youth in Indiana.

This year's strategy is to partner with Indiana colleges and universities and assist in the education and prevention of underage drinking. In this grant cycle, new and innovative media campaigns specific to college-aged young people will be developed to increase public education and awareness of underage drinking laws and issues. Other media campaigns will be developed to complement the broader strategies directed at young people in high school and the adults that may be willing to provide alcohol to them. This line of thinking often follows adolescents into adulthood, shaping society's tolerance of the misuse of alcohol. In line with targeting adults, we will continue our collaboration with the Indiana State Excise Police to enforce laws for liquor retailers as well as assist with the project on college and university campuses.

Project/Program Design/Implementation

Phase One – Media Awareness

The project on underage drinking enforcement on and near college campuses will commence with a media event announcing the formation of one or more underage drinking task forces throughout Indiana. These events will be held near the site of the first task force to go into operation. At the conclusion of task force operations, a news release will be generated that will describe the outputs of the task force initiative. This constitutes the informational stage of this project to alert students, those under the age of 21 who may consider consuming alcoholic beverages, and those in the alcoholic beverage industry in the affected area about the pending presence and operation of these task forces. The type of media to convey this message will include:

- “Social Norming” marketing campaign on and around college campuses to bring awareness to this issue.
- Partner with local retail outlets where students shop on a regular basis that distribute alcohol (such as gas stations, convenience stores, grocery stores, etc.) and disseminate messaging in those places.
- Create and develop PSAs (Public Service Announcements) for use with campus-based media such as university radio and television stations to broadcast messaging.
- Incorporate targeted, web-based advertising to promote relevant messaging.
- The use of university newspapers/print, local outdoor advertising, retail/point of sale advertising as messaging platforms are all equally effective.

Generating a sustained awareness of a consistent message (i.e. branding) should result in an increased acceptance of the message and should ultimately result in a more accurate perceptions of peer drinking. Ideally, this approach should lead to a reduction of alcohol consumption. In many cases students often have exaggerated perceptions about how much their peers drink, which in turn causes the individual student to drink more excessively (i.e. binge drink). Perceptions of “social norms” are often a good predictor of actual (positive or negative) behavior. As a community issue, the project would also reach out to a younger audience to impact social norming. Using ICJI staff, this project will reach out to middle school/junior high school students by:

- Partnering with schools to create pledges that students sign vowing not to drink or ride in a vehicle with someone who has been drinking;
- Providing backpack inserts to parents featuring “conversation starters” about how to talk with kids about underage drinking;
- Email blasts to parents and school administrators with relevant and timely information (timely: Spring Break, Homecoming, Prom and Graduation);
- Contests rewarding students for positive behavioral choices; and,
- Using local media to reinforce these activities.

The general media interaction for the project at the selected venues would also include utilizing earned media opportunities, distributing timely and appropriate news releases, conducting interviews with the press, submitting Op/Ed articles; and website features.

Phase Two – Task Force Operations

Prior to the media event(s) announcing this operation, the cooperation area law enforcement will have been secured. The coordination of the task force operations and the announcement will be made in such a way that the media event signals the beginning of enforcement operations.

The multi-jurisdictional task force against underage drinking may be composed of officers of the following:

- 1) the Indiana State Excise Police;
- 2) the campus police department;
- 3) a municipal police department if the university is located within the boundaries of a city; and
- 4) the county sheriff’s department in which the university is located.

The task force(s) will operate using grant funding to pay for the enforcement activity of officers deployed in an overtime capacity. All participating agencies will enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding the number of officers that may be deployed from each respective agency, the agency lead for general report submissions, and the use of non-personnel resources.

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) will convene an initial meeting with the commanding officers of all prospective partners (or their designees) to the task force to describe the underage drinking task force process. These representatives will be advised of the method to

secure the necessary grant funding to participate in this effort. Once the number of participants for each respective campus is identified, grant announcements for this funding will be released.

A second meeting for operational purposes will be held with line level officers who will be deployed in this effort. At that meeting the following items will be described or discussed:

- goals and objectives of the underage drinking task force;
- days and times of operations (three month operations);
- the method of filing officer activity reports;
- the method of vouchering for individual payments by the officers; and,
- a short review of the Indiana Code involving the most probable laws on which the officers will base most of their enforcement actions; and
- identification of task force teams.

At the conclusion of a task force operation, output data secured by the Indiana State Excise Police will also be forwarded to ICJI for the compilation of a final report. All participating agencies will also be invited to a post-action briefing at the conclusion of all operations associated with this pilot project. A final report will also be provided to the Board of Trustees of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute.